

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 1414

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, MILI, ET, SO, CU, MA
SUBJECT: MALAGASY FOREIGN MINISTER VISIT AND HORN OF AFRICA

1. CHRISTIAN REMI RICHARD, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MALAGASY REPUBLIC, ARRIVED IN CUBA, NIGHT OF MAY 24, TO HOLD CONVERSATIONS WITH CUBAN LEADERS AND VISIT POINTS OF INTEREST ON ISLAND. RICHARD IS ACCOMPANIED BY HENRI RAFINDRATOVA, DIRECTOR OF MULTILATERAL REALTIONS OF MALAGASY FOREIGN MINISTRY.

2. CUBAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS (MINREX) AFRICA DIRECTOR OSCAR ORAMAS AND DIRECTOR OF EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA CARMEN GONZALEZ TOLD ACTING USINT CHIEF, AT MINREX RECEPTION, MAY 25, THAT MALAGASY INITIATIVE TO MEDIATE IN HORN OF AFRICA IS NOW MORIBUND SINCE MALAGASY REPUBLIC HAD INTENDED ONLY TO MEDIATE BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA. CUBANS ADDED THAT SINCE EXPULSION OF SOMALIS FROM OGADEN, THERE IS NO REASON FOR ANY MEDIATION.

3. ON ERITREA, BOTH ORAMAS AND MISS GONZALEZ SEPARATELY STATED THAT MALAGASY REPUBLIC HAS NO CONTACTS THERE AND, FURTHERMORE, MATTER IS "DESCRIBED BY MENGISTU AS INTERNAL CONFIDENTIAL

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AFFAIR" AND, THUS, INTERNATIONAL MEDIATION IS NOT POSSIBLE.
(COMMENT: CUBANS APPEARED TO BE SUGGESTING THAT MENGISTU HAS TURNED AGAINST THEIR AND OTHER FOREIGN EFFORTS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN ERITREANS AND ETHIOPIANS.)

3. MISS GONZALEZ SAID THAT EFFORT TO REACH POLITICAL SOLUTION ON ERITREA IS LIKELY TO TAKE SOME TIME. MENGISTU'S

NINE-POINTS, SHE SAID, IS LITTLE MORE THAN A WORKING DOCUMENT AND IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO USE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NEGOTIATION WITH ERITREANS. AT SAME TIME, SHE CONTINUED, ERITREANS HAVE NOT ESTABLISHED SUFFICIENT COORDINATION BETWEEN VARIOUS GROUPS AND FIGURES TO DEVELOP A COHERENT NEGOTIATING POSTURE OR TO MAKE ANY SETTLEMENT STICK. IN ADDITION, SHE SAID, ERITREANS STILL SEEM TO FAVOR INDEPENDENCE, RATHER THAN SOLUTION WITHIN ETHIOPIA PUSHED BY MENGISTU.

4. UNDER THESE CONDITIONS, MISS GONZALEZ SAID, APPLICATION OF ETHIOPIAN MILITARY PRESSURE AGAINST ERITREANS IS UNAVOIDABLE. MISS GONZALEZ ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT ERITREANS ARE ALSO MILITARILY PRESSING ON MENGISTU.

5. COMMENT: FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, CUBANS APPEAR TO BE DISCOUNTING ANY MALAGASY EFFORT TO CONTINUE HORN MEDIATION. MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, FOR FIRST TIME, MEDIUM-LEVEL FUNCTIONARIES APPEAR TO BE SHOWING SOME SIGNS OF EXASPERATION WITH MENGISTU AND PESSIMISM OVER ANY NEAR-TERM POSSIBILITIES OF ENGINEERING ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL SOLUTION IN ERITREA. THIS EVENTUALLY COULD CONTRIBUTE TO CUBAN SENSE THAT THEY ARE BECOMING BOGGED DOWN IN HORN.
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